

Contributions
to the
Critique of
Commodity Society

The Boomerang Series no. 8

CHRONOS PUBLICATIONS

The Krisis group has published the German language **Krisis - Beiträge zur Kritik der Warengesellschaft** (*Krisis - Contributions to the Critique of the Commodity Society*), a periodical which transgresses the academic establishment and leftist traditionalism, since the mid-1980s. Within the context of this periodical, a reformulated critique of capitalism is discussed and developed that moves the faded-out Marxian strand of the critique of commodities, value, labor, and money into the centre of attention. Based on that, the beginnings of a fundamental critique of the market and state, politics and nation, bourgeois subjectivity and ideology, and so forth, developed. In addition, in the critical analysis of these positions, a new approach to a feminist criticism of the "commodity-producing patriarchy" has also been formulated. The Krisis group organizes seminars and discussion meetings, publishes books, and publishes articles in various European and Latin American periodicals. Thus, it tries to contribute to the development of a new public discourse of a radical critique of capitalism.

The most important publications of the last years have been:

Gruppe Krisis: Manifest gegen die Arbeit (The Manifesto Against Work).

Kurz, Lohoff, & Trenkle: Feierabend! Elf Attacken gegen die Arbeit (Calling It a Day! Eleven Attacks Against Work)

Robert Kurz: Schwarzbuch Kapitalismus (The Black Book of Capitalism).

Roswitha Scholz: Das Geschlecht des Kapitalismus (The Gender of Capitalism)

Krisis no. 23 with the main emphasis on right-populist and neo-social-democratic "post-politics" (like the case of Haider, Schröder, and Blair).

Krisis no. 24 including, among others, the article Krieg 2000: Der Postmoderne Kreuzzug (War 2000: The Postmodern Crusade) by Franz Schandl.

The Krisis website (www.krisis.org) contains numerous texts (also in English, Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, and other languages).

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KRISIS Contributions to the Critique of Commodity Society

Torror of Labour

Norbert Trenkle			• •		•	•	• •	•	•	•	•	
The Degradation of Culture Robert Kurz								•	٠		•	. 9
Realists and Fundamentalists Robert Kurz					0	•	• •		•	•	•	14
Hysterical Populism				• •			• •		٠	٠	•	20
Totalitarian Economy and Parano Robert Kurz	ia oj	f Te	rro	r.		•	• •		•	٠	•	26

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Terror of Labour

Norbert Trenkle

evident thing; self-evident to the extent that he/she would not even give a second thought to what labour actually is. If one asked somebody, the reply would probably be that work is nothing but an appropriate physical and mental activity; hence, an everlasting necessity for the human existence. Maybe, he/she goes so far to say that labour is the very essence of humanity. Through labour mankind becomes different from other mammals because it is labour, which liberates men from nature. An essay with the title "Anteil der Arbeit an der Menschwerdung der Affen" (app. "The essential role of labour in the transformation process from the Ape to Human Being"), written by Friedrich Engels at the end of the 19th century, nowadays would probably thought to be quite pompous. However, the very phrasing is still able to pinpoint the prevailing state of awareness. It is quite revealing, that German Trade Unions deem this particular pamphlet of Engels' to be one of the few that still deserves to be used in their training courses for members.

In fact, to deny that many things have to be done in order to create the means of subsistence and – moreover – to put life in a happier frame of conditions would be absurd. If mankind wants to get fed it has to grow grain, vegetables, and fruits and it has to breed cattle. It goes without saying that to do this land has to be cultivated, houses and stables built, etc. This entails the necessity to learn how these activities are to be carried out, who does what and when, and how to distribute the production. Some things never change, even if, by proper application of knowledge and technology, it will be less time consuming to achieve such goals. But why is it then that in the bourgeois society all these different activities are subsumed to the one and only abstraction "labour"?

In the first place one could claim that it is just a mere thought abstraction, simplifying the understanding of reality, just like we can say "tree" if we actually mean oak, beech, or birch. But there is a substantial difference. The abstraction "labour" does not refer to the activity as such but rather to the social context in which it takes form. What is deemed to be "labour" is not

based on material and sensual criteria, i.e. what movements of the hands are necessary, what kind of products are to be made, and what is their specific benefit for men. The only decisive factor is, whether an activity materialises in the abstract social context of the production of commodities and some wage is awarded. That is why a particular activity – depending on the context – sometimes is deemed to be labour and sometimes not. Nobody would deny the difference between the painting of one's own sitting room and the same procedure carried out by an employee of a firm of painter and decoraters. In both cases the activity is exactly the same. But in the first case it is carried out to satisfy a certain sensual need (i.e. to get a more beautiful sitting room), in the second case the activity is put into service for a perfectly non-sensual duress: the social-totalitarian constraint to earn money. In view of this constraint all activities become fully equal, irrespective of their actual content. The only thing that counts is the "marketability". For this reason an activity becomes labour.

In the so-called dark medieval times nobody would have hit upon the absurd idea to subsume the activities of a - let's says - blacksmith, woman farmer, knight, or nun to a single abstract category. That only makes sense if men/women are forced to sell their life energy in the form of labour power for an extrinsic purpose that means nothing to them: the blind end in itself of capital accumulation. In Marxism, labour has always figured as the opposite of capital. To a certain degree this is true, but only in so far as labour represents one of the two poles of interest in a common reference system, that is the capitalistic exchange of commodities. If labour is the only way to earn the means of subsistence, men/women become indifferent to the concrete content of their activity to the same extent as the capitalist - who is going to employ them - is indifferent to the purpose of his/her production (except for profit accumulation). Whether the workers/employees produce pesticides, construct motorways, expel beggars from pedestrian precincts, or construct weaponry, a job is a job and must be done. That does not preclude personal preferences and ethical scruples, but the same applies to the capitalist. There are always people who are not willing to produce weaponry, but one will also find thousands of others ready to earn their money this way with pleasure. The multitude of options, so often invoked by media nowadays, turns out to be nothing but a limited number of tick options in a multiple-choice procedure within the boundaries of the fetish system of labour and capital.

Today, most people are no longer aware of the coercive character of work. This shows to what extent this external constraint is already internalised. But one should never forget that – in Europe – it took three hundred years of

force, in fact a war against the majority of the population, to "persuade" people to "deliver" their life energy to the factories on a regular basis. Later, the same bloody procedure restarted in some of the colonies and at the periphery of Europe (i.e. Russia and the Balkans). However, it never had the profound effect of internalisation as it had in Central Europe. In Western Civilisation labour became the "second nature" of mankind and people are no longer able even to imagine another form of affluence creation. The phenomenon that almost every activity (including non-productive activities) are perceived as work, today serves as an appalling indicator of this general awareness. We do housework, homework, brainwork. In Germany any dealing with one's beloved partner is referred to as "relationship-work", if somebody dies, we have to do "grieving-work" and at night we are compelled to do our "dreaming-work". The aforesaid depicts how deeply the social dominant structure of labour is already embedded in the psyche of the individual. And this is probably the reason why, just now, in the crises of the labour society, ordinary people (i.e. the subjects formed by capitalism) turn out to be the main obstacle for the abolishment of the prevailing fetish system. They do not want to stop working, even if it is obvious meanwhile that capital accumulation verges on its inherent limits. The Titanic must not sink; the passengers want the music to keep playing.

The craziness about the current fundamental crisis is that it does not have its origin in a general lack of means, but is rather due to the opposite pole an enormous increase in productivity. Under the regime of a different social order this surplus could easily be utilised to provide for mankind as a whole to a high quality degree. Furthermore, immense portions of time could be made available for leisure and creative-playful activities of all kind. Whereas, under the tyranny of the triad - commodity-production, abstract/alienated labour, capital accumulation as an end in itself - the level of productivity, as currently achieved, will inevitably lead to an even greater number of people being ousted from the production process and thereby cut off from the very basic means of subsistence. Under these circumstances, any well-meant intention of redistribution is condemned to fail because the only criterion for participation in the social product is, and remains, to be employed as labour. The proponents of a base-income can not avoid this fact because such ideas require the skimming-off of the surplus-value generated in the utilisation process of living labour. In order not to stall the engine of the "beautiful machine", a monetary redistribution of such kind can only result in an allocation of alms well below the current social welfare standard. The same applies to schemes for work flexibility and/or reduced hours which are just ways to reintegrate a few of the "ousted" back into the system, most probably on a temporary basis, and, for sure, at the expense of a considerably lower wage.

The whole dilemma must be attributed to the fundamental and inherently insoluble contradiction of the modern production system, which, in order to achieve its senseless and insane object of capital accumulation, depends on the mass employment of living labour. On the one hand, capital is nothing but the fetishist representation of dead labour, i.e. labour that has been performed in the course of the utilisation process. On the other hand, competition (i.e. the process by which the available surplus as a whole is allocated to the various single capitals) is the driving force behind the permanent increase in economic productivity, which results in superfluous labour power - thereby undermining its very own economic basis. Until the 1970's, capitalism was able to defuse this basic contradiction by territorial expansion and by the opening-up of labour-intensive branches (i.e. car production, production of household appliances, etc.). But with the end of Fordism, this dilatory strategy came to a halt. Microelectronics and information technology bring about a massive meltdown of necessary living labour at the core sectors of the utilisation process without any alternatives in sight. The allegedly new and promising fields of employment, notably the so-called service industry, on closer examination turn out to be nothing but a "chimera".

Even if there really had been an economic expansion in the service industry - and not just a fake one based on statistical tricks - this would, unfortunately, not serve as an indicator for even a temporary solution of the capitalist dilemma. First of all, the increase in jobs is - partly directly, partly indirectly - based on an enormously inflated credit and speculation market that has become the engine of the alleged "world-boom". In fact, contrary to widespread public opinion, the exodus of capital into the speculation market is not an obstacle to investment in production, but rather a welcome alternative for capital, which can not be reinvested in any profitable "real economy". The basic capital valorisation crisis cannot be solved this way, even if the problem can be postponed to "some time" in the future. Of course, the longer the dilatory tactics last, entailing the moving away of the "speculation economy" from the "real economy", the more serious will be the repercussions on "real" capital accumulation, national budgets and social security systems when the crash occurs (the Asian financial crisis was just a foretaste).

However, as long as the show goes on, speculative capital gains contribute to the preservation of jobs and may even create some new jobs. This does not only apply to the public sector, which is reliant on the drip of credit banks come what may, but also – more and more – to the private sector of employment. Speculative gains are partially spent on consumers' non-durables, on services and the acquiring of real estate, which triggers off some kind of "job-machine". In the USA, especially, where small shareholders have invested in shares over the last decade, speculative gains have been the decisive factor in consumption. The small surplus of the US budget in 1999 was – above all – due to the skimming-off of speculative gains. As the former governor of the Fed, Lawrence Lindsey, publicly calculated, the Clinton administration is relying on \$225 billion additional revenue until the year 2002 (Wirtschaftwoche, 13.11.1997). "The manna from heaven", as he ironically put it; though it is a very profane heaven that will collapse sooner or later.

Secondly, it is well known that most of the "new jobs", especially in the third sector, are only competitive because wages are extremely low, protection under industrial law has been cut and wage incidentals reduced (i.e.: the risk was transferred to the employees). That means that the lack of economic productivity of such jobs is plastered over by extreme exploitation of labour power and the transfer of the social cost to the public purse, even if the offset is only a superficial one in terms of monetary balance. Once again, the basic contradiction as induced by the crisis can not be resolved this way. From the standpoint of capital utilisation it is not labour power as such that counts, but rather how much value, if any, labour power represents. The criterion is the necessary social labour hour spent on the production of a certain product in relation to the currently valid social average level of productivity. The average magnitude of value though is determined by the productive core sectors on an international level. Low-cost labour can not evade this situation and will always be exposed to a fierce downward competition.

Five hundred working hours spent by a cutter in a backyard sweatshop, may produce a fewer number of pieces and thereby a lower value than one working hour spent by a hyper-modern robot. By analogy, the same applies to the wide-ranging field of commercial services, which produce no value at all but remain systemicly indispensable because commodities must be marketed. The entire field of street trading, which makes up a large part of the informal sector in Third World countries, is to be measured against hyper-rationalised supermarket chains, which effect a higher commodity turnover

with less labour employed. The Third World development theory of the 1980's called this phenomenon "obscured unemployment" because, from the political economic point of view, superfluous labour power is expended. It was thought to be a transitional phenomenon of Third World countries, which would disappear in the capitalistic modernisation process. Yet, the modernisation process failed and the phenomenon is still there. Now, moreover, it is thought to be market economy at its best – according to the cynicism of neoliberalism – if people in general, including those based in the centres of the Western World, are forced to sell their labour power "under-productively", i.e. on miserable terms. The most important thing is that they work at all!

The terrorism of labour can not suceed in the end. But as a strategy of crisis management, it is alarmingly successful at present. Similar to what happened at the very beginning of the capitalistic production system (i.e. some 300 years ago), once again compulsory work is frankly propagated. This time it is not meant to drum factory discipline into the peoples' head and to recruit them for the "armies of labour", but only intended as a disciplinary measure to tame the population. In the old days, the poorhouses, prisons, and "homes" for the mentally sick were utilised to serve as a model of a new form of social reproduction thereby provoking the stiff resistance of the majority of the people. Nowadays, neo-liberals, social democrats, and right-wingers of all kinds are advocating compulsory work for the sole purpose of maintaining a passé system. Worse still is that it seems to meet a deeply rooted craving of the masses. Where there is protest at all, people stand up for jobs – not against compulsory work. More often the subliminal rage is expressed through racism, anti-Semitism, and all manner of social Darwinism: the irrational runs amok.

While the crisis moves apace, people cling desperately to the masochistic illusion that they may still be allowed to sell their life energy on miserable terms in future. If we cannot manage to destroy this fatal fixation and to make mankind aware that the potential of wealth creation, as achieved in the past, has to be liberated from the fetishist forms of capital and labour, the crises of labour society will finally annihilate the social and natural basis of human existence.

The Degradation of Culture

Robert Kurz

O MOST PEOPLE, a fundamental critique of the modern economy seems to be as insane as an attempt to go through the wall instead of the door. When in fact, if viewed from a distance, it is this economy which seems to have all the characteristics of insanity, but since the criteria of the capitalist machine have been generally internalized, they are accepted as normal. When the insane are a majority, then insanity becomes a citizen's duty. But under this pressure, the critique of society retreats from the field of economics and searches for an alternative. The Left, especially, do not like it, when someone drills into the nerve of the ruling economic conditions: it hurts, when one is reminded of one's own unconditional surrender. That is why the Left, disarmed of theory, prefers to denounce any serous critique of the market, money, and the fetishism of commodities as an old-fashioned and unfruitful "economism" that one personally has long since left behind.

And with what does a critique of society occupy itself, when it really is no longer what it is? In the past, the major field of evasion was politics. Members of society within the political institutions even claimed to be regulating the common affairs (and also the economy) of the commodity-producing system with a "discourse of reason". Of that, there remains almost nothing. Politics has long since been degraded to a dependent, secondary functional sphere of the totalitarian economy. Today the capitalist end in itself has eaten away the earlier assumed "relative independence" of politics. Because of this, the critique of society in the postmodern era flees from politics into culture, just as it previously fled from economics into politics. The postmodern Left has become "culturalistic" in every respect and in all seriousness believes that it can somehow act "subversively" in the area of art, mass culture, the media, and the theory of media, whereas it has practically given up the critique of capitalist economy and only listlessly mentions it.

But no matter in what area of society the now-silent-about-criticaleconomics Left flees, the capitalist economy is always there and scornfully grins at it. It is indeed correct, "that this economy has divorced itself from society," as the French social critic Viviane Forrester has written in her book about "the terror of the economy." However, capitalism has only forgotten society in a social sense, but without having released it from its clutches. On the contrary, the totalitarian economy jealously keeps watch so that nothing on earth occurs which does not directly serve the profit-maximizing end in itself. And at the present, that also applies to culture.

The modern economy developed to the same extent as the capitalist sphere of industrial production split off from the rest of the areas of life. Culture in its broadest sense seemed to be an "outer-economic" activity which was banished as the mere refuse of life to so-called "leisure time." This was the first degradation of culture in the modern era: To a certain extent, it was transformed into a nonserious activity and a mere "residual time." But as soon as capitalism completely ruled the material reproduction of society, its insatiable appetite expanded to the immaterial elements of life and it began to collect the split-off areas piece by piece and subjugate them under its inherent business administrative rationality as much as possible. This was the second degradation of culture: it was itself industrialized.

What Marx said about the transformation of material production was thereby repeated, for culture also experienced the transition from a "formal" to a "real" subsumption under capital: At first, the cultural assets were included only formally, then afterwards by the logic of money as real objects of buying and selling. So in the course of the 20th century their creation increasingly became based a priori on capitalist criteria. Capital no longer wanted to be just the agent for the circulation of cultural assets, instead it wanted to control the total process of reproduction. Art and mass culture, science and sports, religion and erotica were increasingly produced like automobiles, refrigerators, or washing powder. With that, the producers of culture lost their "relative independence." The production of songs and novels, scientific discoveries and theoretical reflections, movies, pictures and symphonies, and sports and spiritual events could likewise only take place as a production of capital (surplus-value). This was the third degradation of culture.

At any rate, in the era of prosperity after the Second World War there existed a social buffer, which partially protected culture in many countries from the total grip of the economy. That was the mechanism of Keynesian redistribution. "Deficit spending" did not only feed military armaments and the welfare state, but also certain areas of culture. Of course, the state subsidization placed strong limits on the independence of culture. However, the control by the state was open to discussion by the public and not complete: One can talk to officials and politicians in the event of a conflict,

but not with the non-subjective "laws of the market." With the mediation of "culture Keynesianism", a part of cultural production was only indirectly dependent on the logic of money. As long as radio and television, universities and galleries, artistic and theoretical projects were state managed or subsidized, they did not directly have to subjugate themselves to business administrative criteria and there existed certain margins for critical reflection, experiments, and minor "unprofitable arts," without the threat of immediate material sanctions.

This situation has completely changed since the beginning of the new world crisis and the concurrent neo-liberal campaign. The end of socialism and Keynesianism hit culture the hardest, since – of course – funds were first cut here. The states have not disarmed militarily, but culturally. For a small part of the cultural spectrum, private sponsoring has taken the place of government support. There are no longer any social and cultural civil rights, but only the charitable capriciousness of capitalist winners. The producers of culture are subjected to the personal moods of the moguls of capital and mandarins of management, for whose bored wives they serve as hobbies and pastimes. Like the court-jesters and servants of the Middle Ages, they have to wear the logos and emblems of their masters in order to be useful for marketing.

For the vast majority of the arts, sciences, and cultural activities of all kinds, even this humiliating and arbitrary sponsoring is no longer possible. They are presently subjected directly and unfiltered to the mechanisms of the market to an extent never before experienced. Scientific institutes and sports clubs must go to the stock market, universities and theatres must make profits, and literature and philosophy must meet the criteria of mass production. Only that, which is useful as an object for the recreational activities of the helots of the market, reaches the large channels of distribution. Accordingly grotesque distortions occur in the gratuities for cultural achievements: While soccer and tennis players receive earnings in the millions, the producers of critique, reflection, portrayal and interpretation of the world sink down to the status of toilet cleaners. By means of capitalist rationalization of the media; low wages, "outsourcing," and business administrative slave driving are applied to the cultural sphere.

This can only result in the destruction of the qualitative content of culture. Poorly paid, socially degraded and hounded culture and media workers logically produce miserable products; this applies equally to this area as any other. In addition, the brutal reduction towards the shortened time horizon and the mass distribution of the market reliably eliminates anything that

wants to be more that a one-way product. Soon we will find in bookstores only pitiful soft pornos, cookbooks, and esoteric works for the depraved middle class. The unleashed logic of money also leaves behind a trail of destruction in the sciences. The human and social sciences are being rooted out of the academic services like weeds, since by their nature they cannot be made to conform to the market. Above all, the institutes of history are subjected to the "mobbing" and withholding of means because the ahistoric market no longer needs a past. Total natural science, once and for all, takes the place of philosophy and social theory. Even within the natural sciences, pure research is being devalued and strangulated as the commissioned research of capital gains favour.

These tendencies also necessarily lead to the collapse of cultural subjectivity in bourgeois society, just as they have already devalued political and religious subjectivity without having put anything new in its place. Today, not even a conservative "is" conservative any longer; he or she is simply somebody that sells conservatism like others sell tomato paste or shoestrings. The current orthodox pope, in particular, turns out to be a marketing specialist for religious events; soon the churches and sects will go to the stock market and market religions according to the principles of shareholder value. Artists and scientists are experiencing the same desecration of their personality. If they hurry along in obedience by thinking and producing a priori the categories of 'saleableness', then they have already lost their cause and can only ratify their self-abandonment, like the successful artist Baselitz did in a moment of truth when he turned his paintings toward the wall.

"Economism" is not the faulty and one-sided thinking of incorrigible Marxists; it is instead the real tendency of the ruling order of society toward economic totalitarianism, which is perhaps having its greatest and final thrust. However, capitalism cannot exist on its own footing. Just as the pharmaceutical industry loses its last source of knowledge and material when the rain forests are finally destroyed, so must the culture industry dissipate when it cannot tap any more creative subcultures because the commercial independence of the masses has finally died out. A society, which consists of panting, obtrusive salespersons and cannot reflect upon itself, has also become socially and economically intolerable.

For the producers of culture, art, and reflexive thinking, there is no more reason to place themselves at the disposal of miserably paying and high-handed capitalism; fishing for compliments in the postmodern desert of the market. If they still possess a remainder of self-respect, they have to emigrate

inwardly and, at least, secretly declare their irreconcilable hostility to the criteria of the market. This movement must not be passive; it must become active. Perhaps the cultural producers should form themselves into anticapitalistic groups, cooperatives, guilds, clubs, and associations that do not want to sell anything, but instead strive to save cultural resources from the barbarism of the market. By uniting with the injured and insulted, and giving social misery a cultural expression instead of chiming in with the happy positivism of the postmodern optimists, this movement will distinguish itself from the cultural conservatism, which always conforms to power.

Realists and Fundamentalists

On the way back to the 17th century: The ideological self-delusion of the West.

Robert Kurz

No THE WAY it sees itself, the West is the "free world," the democratic world, the reasonable world, in short: the best of all possible worlds. This world is to be pragmatic and open, without a utopian or totalitarian claim. Everyone is to find his or her own salvation, as promised by the tolerance of the European Enlightenment. The representatives of this world say that they are realists. They claim that their institutions, their thoughts and actions, are in agreement with the "natural laws" of society, with "reality," it being the way it is. Socialism, so we hear, perished because it was "unrealistic." Along with socialism, every utopia of a fundamental transformation of society is to be buried for all time. And the former critics of the Western "way of life" jostle their way to the box office to get their entrance ticket for globalized capitalism on time.

This idyll of tolerance and of global capitalist democracy, however, has given rise to a new enemy. It is true that socialism is dead, but in its place, religious fundamentalism has entered the arena. Fundamentalism is ugly, much uglier than socialism could ever have been. And in the eyes of Western ideologists, it looks quite Arabic. In recent years, the Pentagon has begun construing Islamic fundamentalism into a substitute historical enemy. The Muslim "arc of crisis" from Pakistan to Mauritania is now considered to be a strategic battle region. In the new constellation – just like in the times of the cold war against socialism – all the powers that profess to be for the West and against fundamentalism are supported, even if it is a matter of ever so corrupt and cruel regimes. But the new strategic equation, with which the Western specialists responsible for the conception of enemies try to justify their further existence, will not work out. Fundamentalism is not a rational, politically definable and, in its actions, calculable enemy as was socialism.

It also does not have a definite centre in the world and, above all, is not limited to Islam. In recent years, fundamental Christian sects have

increasingly taken the place of the socialist movements in many non-Muslim regions of Africa and in all of Latin America.

And the same societal madness of religious fundamentalism now flourishes in the Western centres of the world market. It was a shock for the USA, when it turned out that it was not foreign Islamic terrorists that carried out the devastating bomb attack of Oklahoma, but white US Christians with the ideology of Christian "warriors of God." For years, "God's own country" has been overrun with radical evangelistic sects that incidentally also control the evangelization of Latin America. For many youths in Germany, obscure religious groups have become a substitute for politics; there is a heated open discussion about the influence of clandestine sects like the "Scientology" church which infiltrate the economy and society. And who would have thought, that in a country like Japan, which is considered to be a model pupil of capitalist success, a radical apocalyptic sect like Aum Shinrikyo with its leader Shoko Asahara could influence so many people and could even recruit followers from the Japanese army?

"God's lunatics" are advancing everywhere. Where do they come from? Certainly not from another planet. They come directly from the heart of the capitalist world itself. In reality, neo-liberalism knows little about humans. Today nobody can deny that social misery spreads like wildfire in the liberal world of the market. Not only in Brazil, but also in the whole world, Western freedom and tolerance shows itself cynically as a "democracy of apartheid," as it was aptly labelled by Jurandir Freiere Costa (The University of Rio). At the same time, social relations are disintegrating not only in slums, but also in all classes of society. Both the real processes of the market and neo-liberal ideology have the tendency to dissolve all human relationships into the economy. In 1992, the US economist Gary S. Becker was awarded the Nobel Prize for the theorem that even outside of the market, all human behavior is aligned with cost-benefit viewpoints and can be mathematically depicted, even love.

The "realists" have the same answer for social misery as they do for the misery of human relations and feelings in a totally economized, rationalized world; they simply shrug their shoulders and get down to capitalist business. But misery cannot stay silent; it must find a language. And because the rational language of socialism is dead, the irrational language of religion returns in a broken-down society; but with a wild and malicious grammar. Economic neo-liberalism shouts "capitalism," and the pseudo-religious echo shouts back: "end off the world." It now turns out that socialism was not just

an ideology, but also a sort of moral filter, without which modern civilization cannot exist. Unfiltered, unbridled capitalism suffocates in its own moral filth, which is no longer institutionally treated.

For almost 150 years, up until the 1970's, every thrust of capitalist modernization simultaneously gave rise to a reforming or revolutionary social activity of intellectual youths. Again and again, the solidarity with the "insulted and injured" was a strong impulse for opposition and a radical critique of society, particularly with the "golden youth", the "most beautiful youth", of the upper classes. Following the global victory of the market, this impulse has died. The "golden boys" and "golden girls" of the neo-liberal era only want to play the stock market. The youth of the middle class is narcissistically demoralized and is not even intellectual anymore. It has surrendered spiritually and intellectually to the total market. Whether in Egypt and Algeria, or Brazil and India: The Western-orientated youths dream of making money as engineers and doctors, or as soccer players and track and field athletes; they no longer feel any responsibility for social misery.

And in the West, the middle-class youths also sink into social cynicism. Among some youths in Germany that drive expensive cars, it has become chic to wear a button with the label: "Your poverty disgusts me." The remaining intellectuals aesthetize the misery and exploit it commercially; the agony of the starving is instrumentalized for commercials. The spiritual orientation according to the logic of the market has even brought forth a "cult of evil." In his book about the renaissance of evil, the German sociologist Alexander Schuller says: "Our daily life and imagination are no longer occupied by progress and reason, but by evil." Since the decline of socialism, there has been an increase in empirically measurable cruelty. But if the youth of the middle class has degenerated, then the children of the poor can no longer rationally and morally indict their own misery. During a survey among youths under fourteen years of age in Moscow, which asked about the 'dream job', the majority of boys answered "mafioso" and the girls "prostitute."

Fundamentalism does not do away with this condition of demoralization; it only gives it an irrational spiritual expression. When this pseudo-religious regression seizes the remains of a lost hope which has been dropped by history, then it becomes a vague wish to finally be left in peace by capitalism: to find the way back to a peaceful social order and to be able to sit on a bench in front of the house, without having to think, full of fear, of the next day. However, fundamentalism does not have a program for social emancipation, but only for the ideologization of blind aggression, which the failure of emancipation has left behind. Its whole program exhausts itself in a

religiously cloaked impulse, as it manifests itself in an expression used by youths in the slums of Paris: "J'ai la haine" (literally 'I have a hate'). The new religions of hate, be they of a Christian or Islamic origin, are of an altogether synthetic, arbitrary, and eclectic nature. Apart from the name, they have little in common with the authentic religious traditions that they refer to. They are a product of the disintegrating modern era in the Western and the Westernized societies of the world market. Precisely because they have no historical perspectives to offer, they become alternative career opportunities for the big and little "leaders" riding the wave of resentment.

The representatives of official society and the ideologists of neoliberalism react to this development with the wish to wed the logic of the market with "conservative virtues." Humans are to be simultaneously egoistic and altruistic, to be simultaneously strong in competition and humble before God, and to simultaneously have a fixation for the abstract costbenefit calculation and be morally clean. With this ethical and pedagogical schizophrenia, the thinking of the capitalist "realists" itself blends in with the lies of fundamentalism. Both ideologies are becoming as alike to each other as two peas in a pod. That is not surprising, for the background of fundamentalism is not only based on poverty, but also on the middle class fear of the poor. The pseudo-religious mania nestles itself equally in the minds of the poor and the rich. And the religiously cloaked social militancy of the middle class is no less violent than the madness of the poor. In his essay "Ausblicke auf den Bürgerkrieg" (Prospects of Civil War), the German writer Hans Magnus Enzenberger characterizes this tendency of the "honorable society": "Overnight, inconspicuous citizens turn into hooligans, arsonists, madmen, serial killers, and snipers."

Fundamentalism is "realistic" and "realism" is fundamentalistic. Both possess the same ideological structure. As is well known, both talk about the "end of history," only that the eschatologists of the market believe this end has been reached. In addition, both move in the same media: Just as the managers of the market lust after money, so do the preachers of pretended enlightenment. Like the politicians, they lust after a presence on television, and the "theocracies" lust after the atomic bomb. Those are all Western media. The false prophets possess no idea of a different form of society; they have to let themselves be measured by the formula the Canadian sociologist, Marshall McLuhan, formulated back in the 1960's: "The medium is the message."

Conversely, capitalist "realism" cannot deny its quasi-religious character. Did we not see, how US President Bush, just like his Islamic enemy Saddam Hussein, sent the god of a militant religion to the front line? These are not just external appearances. The rationality of the market has a religious origin; it is only as rational as an end in itself closed irrational system, which brings forth its own inner-rationality. The total world market – the outcome of modern history – is the result of a secularized religion, which began with a Protestant-Calvinistic form. Particularly in the USA, the last superpower of the world market, is to this day influenced by a deep Calvinistic fundamentalism of "making money" as an end in itself. Western tolerance is itself a particularly perfidious form of intolerance, for the god of the market tolerates no other gods besides itself; and it tolerates only that which has a priori and unconditionally surrendered to its media.

The end of history is the reversal of history. At the beginning of capitalist modernization, there were the religious wars of the early 17th century. This period was replaced by absolutism with its state-run economic, mercantile structures. Not until the 19th century did the liberalism of the free market flourish. But how are we to understand the 20th century? It apparently completed the totality of the market. But at the same time it was a century of crisis, in which history began to go backwards. The state-run war economy of both world wars, the budgetary socialism of the East as well as the West, and also the Keynesianism of the West with its state-run economic elements, can to some extent be understood as a return to the mercantile era, but on a higher stage of development. Now, after the bankruptcy of all variants of the modern state-run economy, neo-liberalism promises a new golden era of the free market. But if history has really moved in a backward direction, then we are on the brink of a new era. The American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington (Harvard) says more, than he knows, when he puts forth the hypothesis that the period of conflicts between ideologies and nation states is being replaced by a "conflict of civilizations." Does this mean anything, other than that the process of capitalist modernization, before it is finally swallowed by a black hole of history, is returning to the era of religious militancy and the Thirty Years War?

Neo-liberalism will be sucked with irresistible force into this tendency because it possesses within its "dark utopia" of a total market, a totalitarian religious core. In comparison, socialism was not only a state-run economy, but also the idea of a solidary society that consciously regulates itself instead of following irrational principles. If we do not want the 21st century to turn

into a new period of religious wars, then we must formulate socialism anew and no longer in a state-run economic form. Only this way is it possible, that history will open itself again.

Hysterical Populism

The confusion of bourgeois sentiment and the hunt for scapegoats

Robert Kurz

HE MOST POPULAR parlour game is the hunt for scapegoats. When something goes wrong on a large scale, most often it is imperative not to call into question the matter as such but to look for certain individuals to take the blame. It is not opportune or even possible to hold responsible hybrid objectives, destructive social relationships, or contradictory structures, rather it has to be attributed to individuals lacking in resolution or competence or identified as malicious. It is much easier that a few heads roll than to overthrow matters as they stand and restructure the social dynamic.

The spontaneous tendency of the non-reflective consciousness to iron out troubles by shifting the blame to individuals complies with liberal ideology: In principle, Liberalism has individualised the causes of social problems. The prevailing order of the social system has been raised to the nobility of a dogma to the effect that it becomes a law of nature, thereby unreachable and untouchable by any critical assessment. Hence, the causality of negative experience has to be found in individuals and situated within their actual frame of existence. Personal hardship or failure is the fault of the particular individual concerned, guilty culprits or gangs of accomplices individually generate social crisis and disaster. The system as such can never ever be faulty, rather some individual has done wrong or even committed a crime.

This kind of reflection is deeply irrational but a relief for individual consciousness because one has no need to take pains in ascertaining and criticising the conditions of one's very existence. Problems of the social structure and development, which are essentially impersonal, are identified with particular individuals, social groupings etc. or shifted on to them symbolically. In the Old Testament this mechanism is depicted as the making of a "scapegoat" onto whom society symbolically shifts its sins and then

drives it into the desert. This technique of a superficial personalisation of problems and disaster can adopt two methods.

The first one is to cast the blame on the individuals, groups or institutions concerned. Either the rank and file will denounce leaders or leading bodies as incapable duds, or, if the culprits can turn the tables, they in return will accuse the rank and file of inefficiency, or lacking the guts to pull themselves together etc. In modern politics this mechanism of apportionment of blame is in fact the basis of its mode of operation. The crowd abuses politicians and the politicians abuse the crowd. Any opposition party, as everybody knows, will never attribute social problems to the system of politics and its underlying structure of social (re-)production but will claim that it is due to their competitors who are currently at the helm and have the "wrong" policy.

The second method is even more irrational and hazardous. In general, any social problem is projected onto a single group or certain groups, which are identified as the "absolute evil" thereby serving as a concept of the universal public enemy. Any ideology – according to Marx ideology as such is always a misconception, a distorted picture of the world – puts into operation in one way or another a personalised concept of the public enemy. Even if Liberalism as the modern core-ideology is comparatively pragmatic in its search for culprits and does not hesitate to replace one "wicked" trait with another according to the circumstances (e.g. "unreasonable desires" and the laziness of the poor, "bad upbringing" and criminals etc.), but one has to face the fact that its progeny is committed to one-dimensional concepts of a universal enemy. The most vicious and momentous *idée fixe* hatched out in society's lap is anti-Semitism that culminated in the mass-murder of Jews in Nazi-Germany.

The opposite of an irrational search for culprits would be an emancipatory social criticism not aiming at particular groups of individuals but ready to transform the prevailing forms of social reproduction and social relations. And undoubtedly it is still the Marxian theory that has the greatest potential to take effect in this respect. It is true that the ideas of the workers' movement – which has since reached its own limitations – were, essentially, also personalising in so far as social contradictions were attributed to some sort of "will for exploitation" ascribed to "the owners of the means of production" rather than to the blind laws and forces of the modern commodity producing system. And, ironically, it is this same reduced theoretical approach that can be traced back to the liberal heritage of the workers' movement version of Marxism; namely, the idea that whatsoever problem occurs must be due to mere intentions. However, Marxian theory provides for a far more sweeping

approach to what can be properly called a "critique of the system" and does not confuse the structural crises with "ill-minded" individuals or social groups. Even so, following the collapse of "actual existing socialism" and the triumphant advance of the neo-liberal ideology, social critique was not developed along such line of thought but silenced all together. The social system and its structure became taboo, more strictly proscribed than ever before. However, as soon as the prevailing forms of social relations can no longer be subjected to criticism social problems aggravate; conspiracy theories forge ahead. No wonder that over the last twenty years - along with the decline of Marxism - racism and anti-Semitism have once again gained ground by trying to explain this misery by means of various personifications of Evil. Even in democratic societies, politicians of the centre are searching for scapegoats quite unabashed. In Germany a book entitled "Nieten in Nadelstreifen" (Duds Clad in Pinstripe Suits) by business journalist, Günter Ogger, branding managers failures and declaring them, due to their collective incompetence, to be the source of the growing socio-economic disaster, became a best-seller. However, today's redeemers and heroes are also the losers and accused of tomorrow. Some media even publish charts of "winners and losers of the week" in politics, business, sports and showbiz. The merrygo-round for executives and leading politicians is spinning faster and faster: crisis, breakdowns and bankruptcies set the tempo to which "individually responsible individuals" resign – only to be replaced by others who can't do better. Sacrificing pawns or queens can't soothe the gloomy feeling of some universal menace; in seeking some kind of expression this sentiment gives birth to spectres. Western societies, no longer able to reflect on themselves critically, summon up anonymous mythical apparitions symbolising the elusive Evil of their very own structure.

One of these mythical apparitions of the negative is the *terrorist*. The more mysterious and arbitrary the bomb attacks of various crusaders, warriors of god, Mafia-gangs, the confused or frustrated seem to be, the more they resemble the blind and impersonal "terror of the economy". Long before the lines between terror-groups, state administration, and intelligence services became blurred. Democratic society caught the image of the *terrorist* whenever it looked in the mirror. It is precisely this which enables the shady and dubious figure of the *terrorist* to externalise the resident Evil within the "society of decent Bourgeois" as an abstract foe. The mechanism of projection produces an inverted mirror-image: the ideologically orientated *terrorist* sees in the functional elite the Evil of capitalism incarnate, conversely the democratic politician explains the social insecurity as the

result of a "threat by those terrorists". Both sides, terrorists and security agencies, use the same method of "hunting down" individuals to proudly present the bodies like trophies to the public; staging the "terror of virtue" (Robespierre). Meanwhile the existence of terrorists, whether real or just a phantasmorgia, has become the legitimising precondition for the market-economy democracies all over the world.

Quite similar, in this respect, is the myth of the speculator, which began to blossom in the 90's at the same time that the bubble in the global economy was being blown-up. It is well known, that the clumsy agitation against speculative gains is quite close to anti-Semitism because the latter identifies Jews with the negative aspects of money. In George Soros the myth took on the complexion of an individual, but at the same time he epitomised an anonymous threat: capitalist labour society has a hunch that it is on the verge of obsolescence and projects the problem as a personalised Evil, which is allegedly ready to ruin "respectable labour". The more obvious it becomes that the labour system is self-destructive with the era of speculation as a result, the more dire becomes the need to find a mythical subject that can be regarded ostensibly as responsible. That this irrational explanation is spawned by the perception of people who bet their bottom dollar in the stock market is in fact the precondition for the incarnation of the projection. After the crash of the technology markets, the media are eager to declare the "duped private investor" a victim of sinister financial powers pulling the strings backstage.

Over the last few years while the crisis was culminating another projection has been gaining ground alongside the terrorist and the speculator: the child-abuser is the most recent incarnation of Evil. No magical invocation of the devil can do without a sexual component. Parallel to the alleged "abuse of social welfare" by (preferably foreign) spongers, sexual abuse became a popular subject. One can hardly find a therapist who will not talk his clients into believing that they were subject to "sexual abuse" during childhood. Until now the classification of "bad uncles" remained vague, but it is impossible to miss its closeness to anti-Semitism: the Nazis made the assertion that it was Jews who made humans a commodity, at the same time depicting them as lecherous fiends chasing the innocent girls and children of the masses. Once again official society has to externalise and personify one of its structural aspects as a symbol of Evil. Most of the sexual abuse cases have actually taken place in the "cosy" atmosphere of home sweet home. One should not forget that the Belgian child murderer Dutroux delivered his victims to the most prominent circles to satisfy their lust. Capitalist society is

hostile to children anyway. At the same time this form of society is hostile to the core about lust. The slogan of "sexual liberation" used by the student movements of the 60's, whose protagonists were not able to overcome the prevailing social forms, has only led to a sexualisation of the media and advertising, leaving the actual sex life of the commodity-consuming individual more miserable than ever before.

The manifestation of sexual crimes as an irrational symbolisation of social contradictions thereby becomes even more venomous and malicious. Any diversity of the actual appearance is levelled out in order to conjure up the demons of persecution. In the critical debates of the 70's, sexual thrills as described in literature by authors like Vladimir Nabokov in his novel "Lolita" or Thomas Mann in "Tod in Venedig" was approved as a variant in the spectrum of sexual behaviour to be found in many civilisations — on the condition that it happened within the frame of loving care and without violence. Nowadays the staging in the media of the "populace's healthy sentiment and common sense" equates this side of eroticism with child prostitution, child rape, or the homicide of little children by sex offenders.

The legitimate motive of denouncing and fighting masculine violence against women and children, a problem exacerbated in a crisis-ridden world, turns into its opposite and becomes a tool for demonising the phenomenon instead of criticising it; thereby, barring the way to getting to the root of the matter. This projection mania even stamps children as *child abusers*. In the USA, an 18 year old youngster was brought before the committing magistrate in handcuffs for running away with his 14 year old girlfriend. The same happened to an 11 year old boy who had been observed by a strait-laced neighbour playing harmless doctor games with his 5 year old half sister.

These mythical apparitions of Evil are necessary to discharge the negative energy of the social crisis in an irrational and anti-emancipatory way.

What the *terrorist*, the *speculator*, and the *child-abuser* have in common is that they strike from the dark – just like the anonymous forces of competition. It could be everybody or nobody. Fritz Lang's film "M – The Metropolitan Hunt for a Murderer" (M - eine Stadt jagt einen Môrder), set in Berlin against the background of the worldwide economic crisis, illustrates the oppressive way in which the hunt for an unidentified sex criminal melts into a mass-psychological syndrome, entailing an atmosphere of suspicion, denunciation and raving violence. Society shows an ugly mug no less terrifying than the kisser of the murderer.

Today the very same syndrome makes itself felt on a far larger scale due to the spread of electronic means of communication. Politicians and the media pursue a course of hysterical populism touching on lynch law. When tabloids in England published the names and addresses of alleged *child-abusers*, a raging mob drove some of those named to commit suicide and rampaged the practice of a paediatrician because of its inability to distinguish "paedophilia" from "paediatrics" (a broad hint on the quality of the British education system).

Such "events" only illustrate how far we are already in the grip of social paranoia. A society that is no longer interested in discovering its own secret is doomed to stage witch-hunts.

Totalitarian Economy and Paranoia of Terror

The Death Wish of Capitalist Reason

Robert Kurz

REAT AND SYMBOLIC catastrophes in the history of humanity have repeatedly triggered off contemplation, in which the powerful of the world lay off their hubris, societies reflect upon themselves and recognize their limits. However, nothing of the sort can be observed in capitalist world society following the kamikaze attacks on the nerve centres of the USA. It almost seems as if this barbaric attack out of the darkness of irrationality not only flattened the World Trade Centre, but also all semblance of the faculty of judgement amongst the public of the democratic world. This society does not want to recognize itself in the mirror of terror; instead, it becomes even smugger under the impression of horror. The more forcefully it is shown its limits, the more vehemently it insists on its own power, and the more stubbornly it cultivates its one-dimensionality.

After the terror attack the functional elites, the media, and the rank and file of the global system of "capitalism and democracy" act as if they were all actors and extras in a real production of the film "Independence Day." Hollywood foresaw an apocalyptic event and filmed it as a representation of patriotic kitsch and hillbilly morals. The culture industry trivialized and made unreal the reality of the catastrophe, before it even became real. The spontaneous mourning and complete bewilderment is overlapped by the false rituals of a programmed reaction pattern, which makes impossible any understanding of the connection between terrorism and the ruling order.

When the amateur actor US president conjures up a "monumental battle between good and evil", the hardening of the official democratic consciousness to an angry insensibility becomes clear. By means of this naive view of life, the inner contradictions are projected outwards. It is the elementary scheme of all ideologies: instead of uncovering the connection in which one is entangled, a foreign cause for the events must be found and an external enemy defined. But in contrast to the adolescent dream worlds of Hollywood, there will not be a happy end to the hard reality of a collapsing world society.

In the movie "Independence Day" it is extraterrestrials fittingly that attack "God's own country" and are, naturally, heroically beaten back. The role of the outer-worldly, outer-capitalistic, outer-rational aliens is now, evidently, to be played by militant Islamism. As if it was a recently discovered strange culture which has turned out to be a dark threat. In the search for the origin of this evil, the Koran is leafed through as if the motives for these usually unexplainable acts can be found there.

Agitated Western intellectuals are not ashamed of labelling this terrorism as an expression of a pre-modern consciousness that missed the era of Enlightenment and therefore must demonize the wonderful Western "freedom to self-determination," the free market, the liberal order, and in general everything good and beautiful about Western civilization in acts of blind hate. As if there had never been an intellectual reflection about the dialectic of Enlightenment and as if the liberal notion of progress in the catastrophic history of the 20th century had not long ago embarrassed itself. The arrogant, as well as ignorant, bourgeois historical philosophy of the 18th and 19th centuries returns as a spectre in the bewilderment over this new type of insane act. In its' attempt to ascribe the new type of horror to a strange creature, Western democratic reasoning sinks for good below all intellectual standards.

But the fact that all phenomena of globalized society are interrelated, cannot be so cheaply explained: After five hundred years of a bloody and colonial history, after one hundred years of a state bureaucratic industrialization and a catch-up modernization, after fifty years of destructive integration in the world market and ten years under the absurd rule of the new transnational finance capital, there is truthfully no exotic oriental space that one could understand to be foreign and external. Everything that presently happens is directly or indirectly a product of the coercively standardizing world system. The One World of capital is itself the womb which gives birth to the mega-terror.

It was the militant ideology of Western economic totalitarianism which paved the way for the equally militant neo-ideological delusions. The end of the state capitalist era and its ideas were used as the occasion to silence critical theory. The contradictions of capitalist logic were not allowed to be talked about, they and the questions of social emancipation beyond the commodity producing society were declared to be irrelevant. The intellectual ability of reflection of Western societies came to an end with the supposed

final victory of the market and competitive principle. The people of this world were to become identical with capitalist functions, even though the majority were already marked "redundant."

While the financial mechanisms of shareholder value threw billions of people into poverty and despair, the majority of the global intelligentsia mockingly sang the song of capitalist democratic optimism. They have now paid the price: when critical reason is silenced, its place is taken by murderous hate. The objective unbearableness of the ruling mode of production and living no longer asserts itself in a rational, but an irrational manner. After the retreat of Critical Theory the advance of religious and ethno-racist fundamentalism followed. As long as the fundamental emancipatory critique of capitalism does not form itself anew, the eruptions of social and ideological paranoia will be the sole gauge for measuring the degree to which the contradictions of the world society have matured. Under these conditions, the officially ignored and downplayed crisis of the globalized capitalist system has taken on a new dimension with the new quality of mega-terrorism in the USA.

That which appears as a strange fury of terror, not only grew up on the capitalist One World breeding ground, but was also bred by the repressive power apparatus of those Western democracies, which now wash their hands in innocence. Saddam Hussein was armed by the West against the Iranian Mullah-regime, which itself crawled out of the modernization ruins of the Shah-regime. The Taliban were coddled by the USA, schooled and armed with efficient anti-aircraft missiles because back then everything that was pointing toward the Soviet Union counted as belonging to the realm of the "good." And for the same reason the muddle-headed Osama bin Laden, now blown up as the mythical incarnation of evil, originally entered the world arena of armed paranoia as a "baby" of Western secret services. The "security" imperialism of NATO - which wants to forcefully hold control over that part of humanity which is no longer reproducible - also uses, presently befriended, torture regimes and diverse lunatic characters in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Pakistan, Columbia and elsewhere. But because this world is coming apart at the seams, one little monster after the other becomes independent. Today's baby is always the "incomprehensible monster" of tomorrow.

The lords of terror, the warriors of God, and clan militias are by no means only a product of the instrumentalized powers of the West that are now beginning to slip out of its grasp. Their state of mind is also not "medieval," but postmodern. The structural similarities between the consciousness of

capitalist "civilization" and the consciousness of the Islamic terrorists are not so astounding, when one considers that capitalist logic is a matter of an irrational end in itself. The economic totalitarianism also divides the world into "the faithful" and "infidels." The ruling "civilization" of money cannot analyze the origin of terror rationally because it would then have to question itself. Thus, the enlightened West defines Islamism as the "work of the devil," just as vice versa the latter does the West. The irrational dichotomous pictures of "good" and "evil" resemble each other to the point of ridiculousness.

What goes on in the minds of the chief terrorists is in its nature no more bizarre than the ways and means used by the chief managers of global capitalism to make use of and maltreat humans under the destructive force of abstract business economics. Religious terror strikes just as blind and senseless as does the "invisible hand" of anonymous competition, under whose rule millions of children permanently hunger – to name only one example – which casts a strange light on the celebrated cult of consternation over the victims of Manhattan.

In this respect, when the media indicates a secret admiration, between the lines, for the undreamt of technical and logistical possibilities of the terrorists, the spiritual affinity becomes clear: both sides equally belong to the modern "instrumental rationality." Uncannily, what Captain Ahab says in Melville's great parable about the modern age, "Moby Dick," applies to both: "...all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad." The economy of terror corresponds with the terror of the economy. Therefore, the suicideattacker turns out to be the logical continuation of the lonely individual in universal competition under conditions of hopelessness. What is now making its appearance is the death wish of the capitalist subject. That this death wish is inherent in Western consciousness itself and is not only produced by the social, but also by the spiritual desolation of the totalitarian capitalist system, is proven by the periodic instances of middle-class kids running amok in the schools of the USA and the murderous attack of Oklahoma, known to be an authentic product of the inner derangement of the USA. The human who is reduced to economic functions becomes just as deranged as the human that is spit out as a "redundant existence" by the process of exploitation. Instrumental rationality releases its children.

Capitalism can only call for a crusade, a "holy war" of Western "civilization," because the irrational core of its ideology is as alike to Islamic fundamentalism as are two peas in a pod. Only star US columnists, brokers in Manhattan, and citizens of Western freedom count as real victims and are mourned in commemorative worship services. In contrast, the deaths of Iraqi

civilians and Serbian children (that were mutilated by bombs dropped from a height of 10 kilometers because the precious skin of US pilots was not allowed to be scratched) did not appear as human casualties, but as "collateral damage." The global apartheid does not even spare the dead. The Western idea of human rights has a silent prerequisite of personal saleableness and of solvency. Whoever cannot satisfy these criteria is no longer a human, but a unit of biomass. Thus Western fundamentalism, as was already determined by the French author Jean Rufin at the beginning of the nineties in the last century, divides the world into the allegedly civilized "empire" on the one hand, and the "new barbarians" on the other.

The empire totters. Within a few months, the myth of economic invulnerability has embarrassed itself with the collapse of the "New Economy." Now the myth of military invulnerability along with the Pentagon has gone up in flames. The functional elites with their utilitarian thought even try to make use of this catastrophe. In the midst of the fall of the financial markets, one suddenly has the material for an alibi for the moment when the financial bubble bursts and world capitalism possibly collapses: it is not the obsolete ruling order that is to blame, but instead as Wim Duisenberg, President of the European Central Bank (ECB), has tried to make out the "external shock" of the terror attack which is the cause. The system failure is redefined as the external evil of foreign "infidels," but is not made undone by it.

At the same time, a wave of hysterical and pathetic war propaganda, which could have been written in August 1914, is rolled out. Everywhere masses of volunteers appear, in the middle of the crash the stocks of the armaments industry rise. But clandestine groups of men, armed with knives and carpet-cutters, do not demand the mass mobilization and concentration of all the powers of society. Terrorism is not an external counter-empire with the same level of statehood and war economy resources. It is the inner nemesis of globalized capital itself. For this reason, it cannot start a new arms boom. And militarily the crusade will also be in vain. If, as is usual, the retaliatory attacks of the USA from a height of 10 kilometers decimate just any old civilian population or if ground troops wander with many casualties, like the army of the Soviet Union experienced in Afghanistan, through remote mountain regions: Capitalism will no longer be able to suck nourishment for its survival out of this pseudo-war against the self-produced demons of the world crisis.

Voices of reason can also be heard, from firefighters in New York to individual journalists and politicians, who at least say that a war would be

completely senseless. But this reason threatens to stay helpless and will be washed away by the wave of irrationality if it does not find a way to analyse the crisis conditions. There is only one way to really rob terrorism of its breeding ground: the emancipatory critique of the global totalitarianism of the economy.